ALEX JANVIER

HOMEBOYS

AL AN SYLIBOY

AGNS

ExxonMobil Art Gallery *of* Nova Scotia

Homeboys: Alex Janvier and Alan Syliboy
7 April - 3 June 2001
Central Guaranty Trust Gallery in memory of Henry B. Rhude (1)
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Curator:
Jim Logan, First Nations Curatorial Resident

Printed in Canada
© 2001 Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
ISBN 0-88871-664-8

Published by the
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
PO Box 2262
1723 Hollis Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3C8
www.agns.gov.ns.ca

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Photography: Jim Logan, unless otherwise noted
Design: Semaphor Design Company Inc.
Printing: BroMoc Print
Photoengraving: Maritime Digital colour

Cover Images
Top: Alex Janvier, *Dicession*, 1966, acrylic on canvasboard, 61 x 75 cm. Collection of the Indian Art Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada
Bottom: Alan Syliboy, *Joe Julien and Members of the Grand Council*, 2000, glicee prints, watercolour on paper, 41 x 55 cm. Collection of the artist.

The exhibition was made possible with support received from:

ExxonMobil

The Canada Council for the Arts
First People's Secretariat Aboriginal Curatorial Residency Program

Nova Scotia arts Council

DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, in the late 1980s, began planning for a major exhibition to acknowledge Mi'kmaq and Maliseet artists. Early discussions with SCANA (Society of Canadian Artists of Native Ancestry) provided helpful input on an exhibition concept. With the advice and assistance of MACS (Mi'kmaq Association for Cultural Studies) and a special collaborative committee, the exhibition was expanded to include artists from across Atlantic Canada. Thus, the first major exhibition organized by the Gallery to celebrate contemporary art by artists of native ancestry was organized and displayed in 1993.
I want to acknowledge the special efforts of Dr. Dianne O'Neill, AGNS Associate Curator who co-curated that important exhibition with Viviane Gray.

Since that time, we have continued our efforts to raise awareness of First Nations cultural heritage by growing the collection in this area and providing programming to create a greater understanding of First Nations art.
We have been very fortunate in receiving support from The Canada Council for the Arts who made it possible to have Jim Logan on staff for two years as our First Nations Curatorial Resident. Jim has very ably assisted us and has helped to guide our growing collection of work by Aboriginal artists.

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia is proud to present this exhibition of work by Alex Janvier and Alan Syliboy. Two Aboriginal artists, each living at opposite ends of Canada, but with striking similarities of their lives and work. Jim Logan brings these two artists together in a remarkable expression of togetherness yet with a uniqueness of "home".

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia's commitment to the preservation and presentation of First Nations contemporary art remains strong, and we hope that "Homeboys: Alex Janvier and Alan Syliboy" will continue to nurture a greater appreciation of contemporary First Nations art and its impact on the everyday lives of Canadians from coast to coast. To further these efforts, we are taking steps to have a stronger presence of First Nations art in both our collection and exhibition programming. We are grateful to The Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program and the Art Sales and Rental Society for providing funding over the past year to enlarge our collection of works by First Nations artists. As well, we are planning for a more permanent way to acknowledge First Nations art within the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

I want to express my sincere thanks and congratulations to First Nations Curatorial Resident Jim Logan, for his respect and integrity, and for all that he has brought to the AGNS.

Corporate partners are essential to allow public galleries to enhance their collections and programs. Our sincere thanks are extended to our corporate partner, ExxonMobil Canada, for their generous support of this exhibition. We are grateful to The Canada Council for the Arts for their support of our contemporary programming.

We welcome this opportunity to celebrate the creative artistry of Alex Janvier and Alan Syliboy.

With good wishes.
Bernard Riordon
Director

INTRODUCTION

Homeboys is an exhibition that explores the art of both Alex Janvier and Alan Syliboy.

It is in every sense a comparative study on the works of two artists who live almost three thousand miles apart yet have quite interesting similarities. Both have always lived in their home communities; both have attended art school, both have made a living as professional artists and out of four designs commissioned by the Royal Canadian Mint, both have had their designs selected to be placed on gold coins for the year 2000. These are all quite intriguing similarities but the most relevant to me is their artwork. Both use a similar iconography that is depicted in an almost abstract form that reflects their own culture, Alex Janvier is Dene and Alan Syliboy, Mi'kmaq.

Alex Janvier is one of Canada's most respected artists. His interest in art was recognized while at Blue Quills Residential School and it was there that he was encouraged to pursue art. He is one of the few graduates from the residential school system who continued his schooling into college and an eventual career in visual art. Janvier graduated from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in 1960 with a diploma in Fine Art. His studies there introduced him to many styles of painting. Wassily Kadinsky[1] was the one painter who interested him. Kadinsky's non-subjective style and the philosophy behind the abstract movement intrigued Janvier. Emotion and inner vision became objectives to the young artist, who over the next decade would become known as the 'First Canadian Native Modernist'[2]. His work has never departed his culture. Within the abstract forms are evidence of his cultural heritage. Evident throughout his work are geometric designs, symbols, and motifs representative of the quill and bead patterns of Denesu'line people.

In the painting, *Foothills Just West*, (1966) within the geometric abstract we see a deer figure which is almost petroglyph-like in its appearance, reminding one of the work of Alan Syliboy. More recent work, for example, *Full Strength Air*, (1994) shows the more characteristic style of Janvier, with its fluid visual effect. Here the feather motif and geometric patterns have become flowing lines, suggesting movement and spirituality, and quite the departure of static geometrics viewed in *Foothills Just West*.

The development of Janvier's work is intriguing. In Homeboys one can see how much the artist's work has changed over three decades. Two constants remain throughout his career, one is the political commentary that keeps occurring in his title, i.e., *Too Many Spotted Treaties*, *Hilarious Caucus*, and *Blood Tears*. It is important to note that Janvier has always been active in the politics of First Nations, signing his work with his treaty identification number 287, from 1966 to 1977, as protest to the bureaucratic system of identification for First Nations people. The other constant, which is comparable to the painting history of Alan Syliboy, is the continued use of symbols identifying his cultural background in paintings that would otherwise be considered solely abstract. That, in itself, can be considered a political statement, if not a poetic one, when you consider the historic hegemonic relationship between First Nations people and the governing society.

Janvier was never lost in the Western or Euro art world. With all the attempts the governing society made through the education process, from Blue Quills Residential School to the introduction of ideals and splendour describing western art at the Southern Institute of Technology, Janvier's identity and painting remain, Denesu'line.

In 1998, Janvier's health took a turn for the worse. Stricken with a brain abscess, his limbs became very weak. He had to change his artistic style, and his need to continue painting took him toward abstract washes. Works like *No More Bleeding*, (2000) is an example of this period of work. It is a small gem of a painting filled with simplicity yet loaded with political statement. Referring to *No More Bleeding*, Janvier comments, "You know Jim, they made us sign away our land with a mark of an 'X'. Janvier is currently involved with his peoples landclaim settlement. Alan Syliboy is as culturally grounded as Alex Janvier. Both were raised on reserves and hence both are well aware of the attached stigma of being from a reserve and attempting to find one's place within the dominant society. Syliboy's story is somewhat different, however. Alan's mother made sure that her children did not go to residential school, so Alan went to St. Mary's public school in Truro. Like Janvier, Syliboy's art development began in elementary school. He was a 'doodler', and because there was no structured art class, he would often 'doodle' on notebooks and occasionally on school books. Drawing became a source of pride for Syliboy at an early age. Within the small circle of Mi'kmaq children attending St. Mary's, drawing was considered a talent, and Syliboy was good at it. This may not be your typical source of encouragement but for Syliboy it was enough to keep him within a 'special talent' peer group throughout his school years and beyond.

Alan quit school after completing grade nine, taking on work in his uncle's cabinet workshop. His interest in art followed him. With no formal training, Syliboy's journey from layman to artist was a lengthy process. His tutelage with artist Shirley Bear[3] gave the young Syliboy confidence to continue. He became fascinated with petroglyphs and Mi'kmaq designs in 1970 after seeing a print by Shirley Bear titled, *Abenaki Woman*.

The image awakened Syliboy to a deeper realization of being Mi'kmaq. He began a personal study on petroglyphs and began to add them to his drawings and paintings. He attended the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1974 and enrolled in ceramics as he felt instruction in painting might deflect him from his paintings of petroglyphs. He socialized with other painters at the school and found the interaction with them invigorating and

inspiring, enough to know that he did want to pursue painting as a career. After two years at NSCAD he returned home to pursue his career as an artist.

Syliboy's style of painting began to develop out of the symbols and characters from within his own study of his cultural heritage. Early works like *Untitled Portrait* (1977) and *Two Cranes* (1975), show the simplicity in Syliboy's early works when compared to detailed works such as Blue and *Green Ferns*, (2000) and *Rachael and Charlie*, (2000).

The development of Syliboy's art reflects his personal cultural education. It is a process of self re-evaluation and realization that has become evident in his art. He has acquired a meaning for his identity and this is expressed with the confident use of pattern and character combined with colour, balance in composition, and the intimate spiritual relationship he has with the work he produces. What Alan Syliboy does with his subjects is much like what Alex Janvier does with his. He takes on a subject, a landscape or portrait, and fills it with symbols of his own culture. It is as if he breathes life into his work. Emotion and inner vision are let loose to collide or flow in the creation process. The resulting piece of art mirrors the cultural depth and spirituality of its creator and this enforces an identity for the viewer. I used this term **Homeboys** because both Syliboy and Janvier have a good understanding, intellectually and spiritually, of the significance of being from a place you know as home. They are part of their own community, their art reflects the cultural historic roots of that community and their art places that community into the context of nation. When art does that, then it becomes inseparable from itself, forming identity and nationalism.

The art of the Group of Seven[4] identified Canada to the world. The artworks of Syliboy and Janvier do more than that; they successfully identify nations politically hidden within the western colonial cogitation, a feat that I believe surpasses the quest for recognition in the fraternal art world of early to mid 20th century.

For this catalogue I have interviewed each of these artists individually: Alex Janiver, at his home in Cold Lake and Alan Syliboy, at his home in Millbrook. I asked similar questions in the context of comparing both artists. I was surprised by the similarity of their answers as well as by the difference.

Jim Logan
First Nations Curatorial Resident

[1] Wassily Kadinsky, Russian painter who first practiced non-subjective art later known as abstract.
[2] *Land Spirit and Power*, First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada. Catalogue, Diana Nemiroff, Robert Houle, Charlotte Townsend-Gault, 1992, Catalogue produced by the Publications Division of the National Gallery of Canada. ISBN 0-88884-650-9
[3] Shirley Bear: Artist, Curator and Art Instructor. Born 1936, Negootkook, Tobique Reserve, New Brunswick, presently residing in Vancouver, British Columbia
[4] The Group of Seven were Canadian wilderness landscape painters inspired by the work of Tom Thomson. The group was not limited to the seven founding members, and they eventually changed their name to the Canadian Group of Painters. Besides Thomson, the group included Franklin Carmichael, A.J. Casson, Lionel Fitzgerald, Lawren Harris, Edwin Holgate, A.Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and F.H.Varley.

ALEX JANVIER

Alex Janvier at his studio
in Cold Lake, Alberta
Photo: Jim Dow

I had a chance to visit Alex Janvier at his home in Cold Lake this past February. In his log studio, with three large bright windows facing the lake, Alex exhales and looks around at all his work. I see three large colourful canvases stapled to a wall. There are boxes piled at one end of the studio behind another large stretched canvas painting. There are piles of unstretched painted canvases hanging over another assortment of crates beside them. There is work everywhere, piles of watercolours on paper and boxes of small painted canvases. Paint tubes, jars, brushes and paint soaked rags are scattered about the airy studio. An exhausted empty easel rests in front of a stool, an old couch and chair show off their use. Behind me are three large rolls of painted canvases from the 1992 National Gallery of Canada exhibition, *Land, Spirit and Power*. I am in awe of the incredible amount of work within the studio. Alex shows me work he has completed while suffering through a brain abscess and explains how it forced him to change styles. After two years, his health and control over his hands has returned and he has been able to accomplish his more recognized style. After browsing through many works, we sit and converse about art, personal memoirs and of course, politics.

The next day Alex gives me a tour of his community, and fills in details of areas with the history of each place we visit. "This is where my Grandfather lived, over there lived a mean Frenchman, this is the land the town wants, this is the boundary of the reserve, that is park land there." We travel through a maze of back roads before coming surprisingly back to the highway.

Later, I am invited to participate in a 'sweat'[1] with his family. After the sweat we have the customary feast. I thank Alex and his wife, Jacqueline, for the good time. I am tired, but full of good thoughts and food as I head out onto the highway for the 350 kilometer drive back to Edmonton. When I return to Halifax the next day I feel as though I have made a quantum leap from the bush to the city, from the west to the east. I think of Alan Syliboy and become acutely aware of how wonderful it will be when these two artists meet.

The following interview was conducted in Janvier's studio on February 4, 2001.

JL: Where were you born?

AJ: I was born on the reserve called Le Goff in 1935 - most reserves in those days were named after the friendly priest who changed our spiritual way of life and dominated everything. We were also under the Treaty, or should I say caught in Treaty 6. We were really on the edge, but somehow we were pulled under Treaty 6 by virtue of a signing in 1876 at Fort Pitt, Northwest Territories. I want to add that, because in those days there were no provinces here, the provinces were born much later and their formation and the additional level of government dominated my life and any other Indian life: culturally, spiritually, physically, in lifestyle and in almost every way.

JL: What is your tribal affiliation?

AJ: I belong to the Denesu'line tribe.

JL: Geographically, where is your territory, your home?

AJ: We have a large territory in Canada, starting from here at Cold Lake all the way to Hudson Bay, from here to Hay River, as far north past the north end of Great Slave Lake, across the tundra to Chesterfield Inlet. At one time, before the Europeans arrived, we were many people, known accounts were easily 20,000 in our territory. We have a language, the language of the Dene, 'Dene' explains our position as 'the people,' the 'Denesu'li'ne', people who are civil or civilized. This term was brought about long before we had council with the Europeans. We had a large territory, so we had to be organized. Because, if you look from here at Cold Lake to the North Saskatchewan River, to the farthest point of the tundra, it is a long, long way, over a thousand miles or so, and from here to the Hudson Bay is about 900 miles. We were able to move around completely, mobile free, a free-moving, mobile tribe. We could stay here. Our one central point, 'Houn'ka' is inside the Canadian Air Force bombing range[2] today, that was our capital. Later on, when the treaties were drawn, we moved our capital to Willow Point, Kai'ho'chinla, now the townsite of Cold Lake. Then the Europeans came and took over the land, twisted the laws on us, and gradually started to do away with our lands. They just measured right over our homes so we were herded out to a smaller area which is now called a 'reservation', Cold Lake Indian Reserve

149. This one, 149A, the one I live on, is on the west side of Cold Lake and there is a small one of 177 acres in town which was technically our fishing station, but it became reserve land over the years. So we have three small parcels against this huge territory that we consider our land, 'Ne'ne', and our traditional land is called, 'Dene'li Ne'ne', Land of the Ancients. That gives it a title, also the right to work our lives through those territories as the generation came before lived through there, and the generations to come lived through there, but something happened on the way to here. People from somewhere arrived and set up laws for themselves in their favour - and it is still in their favour - all the laws are in their favour and they keep twisting the laws so that it is always in their favour. So at the moment this town of Cold Lake is fighting for possession of even more of our territory for housing developments. We are always fighting to keep what we have left.

We have also initiated a landclaim here, because of the introduction of a new kind of control of our territory by the military. The military took over our land, the best part. It runs east and west and completely cuts off our access to the north, the area that once made us strong economically and culturally. Up until 1952 not one member of my tribe took a penny from the government or the church.

JL: You attended Blue Quills Residential School. Can you tell us something of that experience, and the difference between going there and attending Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, where you received your formal art education?

AJ: The residential schools came and started pulling the kids right out of the traplines or home bases out in the bush, yanked them right out in the fall and sent them to ten months of residential school without seeing their parents. We'd come back in June, were home for July and August and just starting to speak our language again, when it was time to go back. Personally, I went through that process for ten years. Fortunately, I had a good foundation in my language. I learned from the old people, the elders and old ladies, and they made sure I was well instructed in my language, in my culture and in my livelihood. The major difference between residential school and art school was they didn't give you the rod in art school, but I did get the same sort of control there. I didn't get any physical put downs in art school, just the mental put-downs. I still get those.

JL: Where do you first remember being inspired as an artist?

AJ: One of the finest things that ever happened was for me to see these old ladies doin' baskets. Birchbark. I use to watch them do quill work. There were still a few who did that and the rest of them were doing the Hudson Bay bead[3]. That changed the art style of our people. We became good beaders, beautiful designers. They still had designs of the old, but as time past on, the designs became more and more floral. I think they took the designs out of the Church vestments, you know, and stuff like that. They were encouraged to do that and then the buyers were always Europeans and the Hudson's Bay, who brought the beads and encouraged the floral designs. So, our people swung that way. We had kind of a two-way art here, the old traditional geometric porcupine quill work and then when the beads came along, which were much easier to do, a little more fluid art form, with floral patterns and flowing lines. I observed that, I saw that happen.

JL: How did your cultural background show up when you attended art school at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology?

AJ: When I went to school and started to learn about the European art styles and, whatever, I was already a good pupil. My background was used to hard work and a harsh lifestyle. I learned more than what the school offered. I read a lot, more than the required curriculum. I read books and books on techniques and stories about artists. Whatever was written about artists, I got hold of it somehow. There is the Central Library in Calgary and at the end of the book there are reference books and I would bring that to the librarian who would reply, "So you want some more books, huh?" Eventually the books would arrive and I actually started, or at least technically created, an art book collection for the Central Library of Calgary by doing that. I was a common personality in that area of the library. So I compacted everything I could into those four years, learned all that I thought was learnable, and graduated in 1960.

JL: After art school, how was life as an artist?

AJ: The world wasn't ready for me. I was ready, it's just nobody ever dreamed of a Native going there on the front line, doin' art and changing history. It was totally unthinkable, then people would congratulate me on doin' that and they would go through this 'how does it feel to be an Indian and be successful and blah blah blah...you

know,' I think somewhere there was a new breed of younger Natives coming along and, you know, we carved a trail for them. There were about eight of us who carved that trail. Most everyone knows who those Indians are. I was the only one who kind of had a balance, a direction, because I was articulate and I learned quite a bit on the other side at art school. Some of the other ones, like Norval Morrisseau, well, he is gifted, uneducated, but you know, one day that man, if historians and curators would wake up, they will realize that, that man is one of the best painters of the century - if they will forgive his life style. I mean Van Gogh had no hell of a saintly lifestyle that we know of, or Picasso, or all those guys, it is their art that counts.

And so somewhere in there, we blazed a new trail. Today it is a world of connection, a world of expression. It's a way of our people getting noticed and it foreruns all activities. We kind of forecast what is going to happen to our people by the use of art. Art has always been that way anyway, it's always ahead of its time, so essentially, I was a pace or two ahead of where things were going to go and how it was going to happen. I wasn't going to make it happen, events just happened and I was there. I was also in the right place, with the other side, with Canadian art. I was there when it was decided that Canada was going to back its artists, back in the seventies. I was there when that rise went up, I went up there with a bunch of other artists my age. I think, in the overall picture, we made history happen. We made it happen. Nobody now ran to Europe or New York and came back to tell us how to paint. We painted things here, we did things here, we exerted ourselves and we created what is now called, 'Canadian'. I was part of that development, and I was full front with Native developments as well.

I guess in my own time, in this short span of a career, I was there when different movements took place and it resulted in what we would call the art of what is being looked at today. I have to thank my tribe for that, you know, for giving me a background and for being a person with Indian ancestry. I was able to see what took place on the Indian side and also to see the other side, the extreme side of how the Europeans learned their art and that it is a long distance between. I was able to travel from the trapline to technical school in Calgary. When you look at it, it's like a long, long span of life but it was just a few years. Ten years at Blue Quills and four years there (Technical School).

From 1960 to this day I have been on my own, painting. I never really caught the eye of curators because I was put down as one of those curios, an accident or a fluke. They were waiting for me to either fall out of the picture, or see if I was real. They would wait for me, you know. I think this is how I was dismissed. The other thing that happened to me in that process, and it is a form of elimination, they called my art, 'regional', and I was slated down and lost in that definition. Later on I became labelled a 'radical'. They don't hang radical's paintings in museums but when I go to Europe, and look at the paintings, everyone of them is painted radical in their own way. They didn't follow the form of the day and so today they are celebrated and that's the curators, you know, they can make you or break you and most of them were out to break me. Even to this day, it is still like that because if you don't fit the bill, you don't fit their format, their understanding of art. So we never had a love-in or a fall-out. It's one of these characters, now later in life, I am called too 'political', so now the label is political.

JL: Do you see your work as political?

AJ: It is our everyday life, it's how things come at us. I am trying to tell stories about it in my paintings, trying to say things as they really are rather than how it seems to be and if it's political then that's just too damn bad. I don't try to save my reality or my truth right now. That's what I am all about. If I wanted to become a famous artist, I could have done that too. I could have played the game, done all these things in Europe and have been celebrated when I came back. I could be number one and everyone would mention my name. I could have been in the McMichael[4] and really pampered. But that is not my track record.

JL: You mentioned in an interview with Robert Houle that you realized that that would have only got you to upper middle class.

AJ: Yep, I am upper middle class here on my reserve. Over there, (off reserve), I would just be middle class. I live by a lake, there is bush here, it is natural, everything is still natural. Billionaires would like to live like me. It is desirous for them to live like me because they work so hard, that at the end of their life they have to move to a cottage like mine, live by a lake and go fishing, just like Donald Marshal, just go fishing for food. I live the best life anybody can acquire, it's all done by paintbrush. It's not luck, it is just hard work and staying true and not selling out. I am not giving this thing away, because if I gave it away then it is

gone, and I have to leave something for the next generation. The next generation is now receiving the laurels of being exhibited and I am pretty sure if we hadn't stood up, we wouldn't be showing in galleries today. We would still be in museums.

Now this younger generation has a contemporary history to back-up their work up. You can say there were people there, Bill Reid was there, Norval Morrisseau was there, Jackson Beardy, Daphne Odjig, I'm still here and few others like Benjamin Chee Chee, Carl Ray, and the new force who came along, Carl Beam, who is top rate, and that opened a few doors for the next generation.

JL: You have mentioned the different tags placed upon your career, from regional, to radical, to political. As far as First Nations art goes, how do you personally feel about its presentation by the establishment, ie, public galleries, museums, etc.?

AJ: Verbally, they don't want me in there. If I went in there with all my work, they would have to change their whole system, include a new history, they don't want to do that[5]. They put us on the other side of the river you know[6], with the artifacts, its like that right across Canada and the United States. The Smithsonian is a perfect example, and the Museum of Civilization is just a copy cat of the Smithsonian. These guys copied what they did to the Africans in Europe with African art .

JL: What do you consider as the duties of an artist, young or otherwise?

AJ: Get rid of the fear, stop complaining and just do it. Get on with your life in a spiritual way. Respect your background, your language and your people. Respect the land and the spirits.

Talk to your old people, they really want to talk with you. If you don't go and talk with them all that knowledge will go with them.

Don't get caught up in materialism, the mighty dollar, money. The Europeans are beautiful empty people, they are looking for what we have, the knowledge of the land and its spirituality. Well they can't buy that, it not like buying a car or a house, there is no price for it. They come to our reserve and they think we know nothing because we are poor, we can see that they lack heart and spirit. That is a difference between us. Even our young artists are lacking heart and spirit, they have to come back and listen to the old people or else they will be lost.

JL: What do you love about art?

AJ: What I love about art is that it is what I am. It makes my spirit and my spiritual life complete. There isn't any other reason. If I did it for money and good times, then my spirit wouldn't be intact. I am quasi successful and I don't need more than that. I don't need to be a celebrated person, I was already celebrated when I came into this territory. I have lived through a harsh, tough life made up of a colonized rut but my spirit is strong. There was a lot done to my body, my life, to destroy that spirit and they couldn't do it, nobody could do it. The one thing I did was keep that spiritual tact together, I didn't know how fortunate I was, how lucky I was, to be able to do that. That's art.

What I do physically is the essence of the outcome of that, it may come out as paintings, or expressions through those paintings, but it is always something that all of us, all us Natives across this land, are hanging onto. Many of us die on the way, many of us perished in group homes, residential schools, many of us perish in the work place, many of us perish in the welfare lines but it is still there. We know what we are talking about, that's what we were given, that was what was handed down to us. It is up to us to flourish, and then pass it on to the seventh generation[7].

Museums don't do that, art galleries don't do that. They don't know what life is about, they don't know Canada, and yet they try to own every inch of it.

JL: Thank you for your time Mr. Janvier

AJ: Macsi'chok

[1] 'a sweat', short for a Sweat Lodge Ceremony.

[2] The Canadian Armed Forces established a base at Cold Lake, Alberta in 1952, appropriating much of the Cold Lake Reservation in the process. Today there is an ongoing negotiation for compensation.

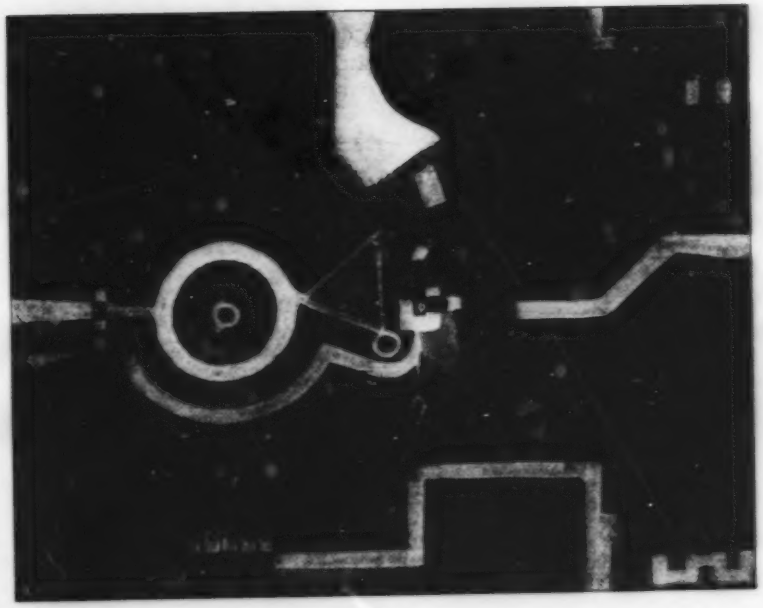
[3] Late in the 18th Century the introduction of blue and white " trade beads" poured into the Northwest Territories through companies like the Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company. In the latter half of the 19th century more variety of size and colour became available.

[4] Reference to: The McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

[5] It has only been in the past twenty years that public art galleries have been confronted with the issue of equality in the arts. Aboriginal art has its own history separate from that of European art. Almost all public galleries had no work by Aboriginal artists within their collections other than the more popular and marketed Inuit art. Thus Aboriginal artists work was designated to museums for their anthropological significance rather than their artistic achievement.

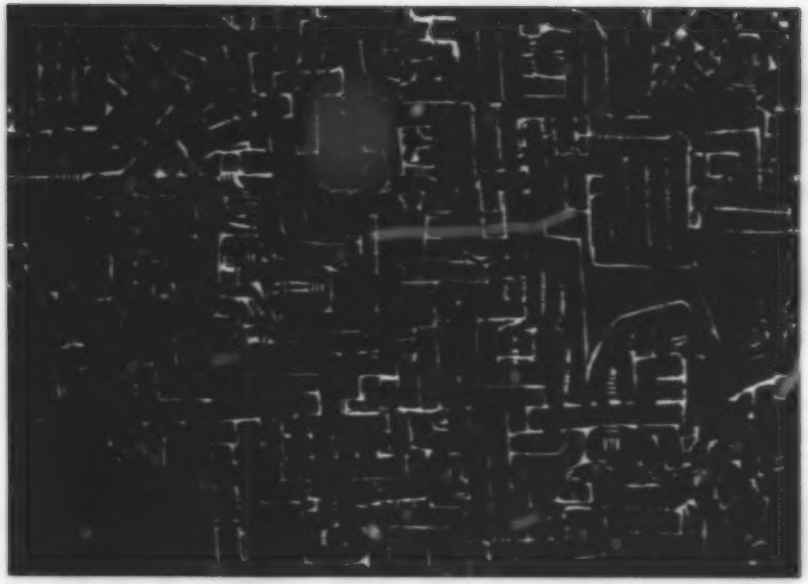
[6] Reference to the location of the Museum of Civilization in relation to the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa/Hull.

[7] A spiritual reference regarding the personal responsibility of caring for the earth and things sacred up to the seventh generation.



Dicession, Alex Janvier
1966, acrylic on canvasboard, 61 x 75 cm.
Collection of the Indian Art Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada

Chess Game Lopsided, Alex Janvier
n.d., acrylic on canvas 60.5 x 81.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Que

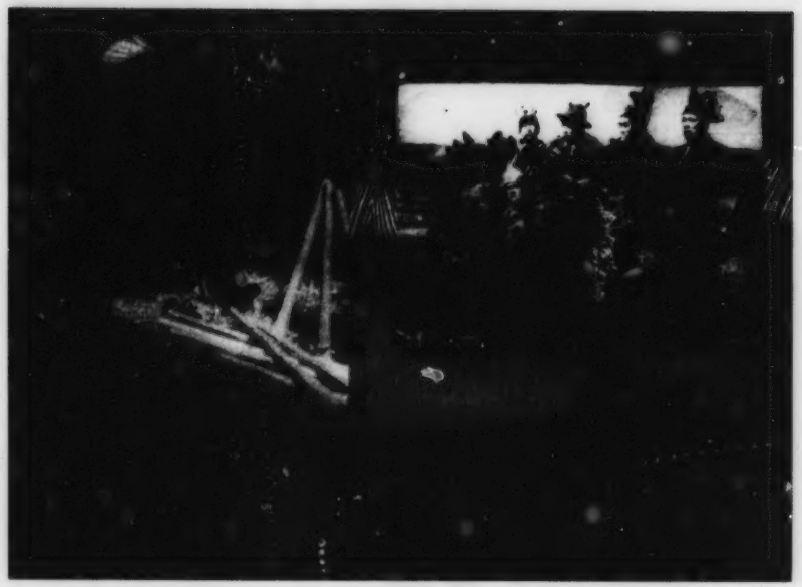


Foothills-Just West, Alex Janvier
n.d., acrylic on canvas board, 60.3 x 81.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Noh'we (Trappers Festival), Alex Janvier
1993, acrylic on canvas, 30.5 x 23.0 cm
Collection of the artist

Sun Shines, Grass Grows, Rivers Flow, Alex Janvier
1972, acrylic on canvas, 60.0 x 90.7 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Too Many Spotted Treaties, Alex Janvier
1966, acrylic on canvas board, 80.6 x 65.2 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec



Joe Julien and Members of Grand Council, Alan Syliboy
2000, glicee print, watercolour on paper , 41.0 x 55.0 cm
Collection of the artist

Red Star, Alan Syliboy
1999, acrylic, ink on paper, 47.0 x 59.5 cm
Collection of the artist

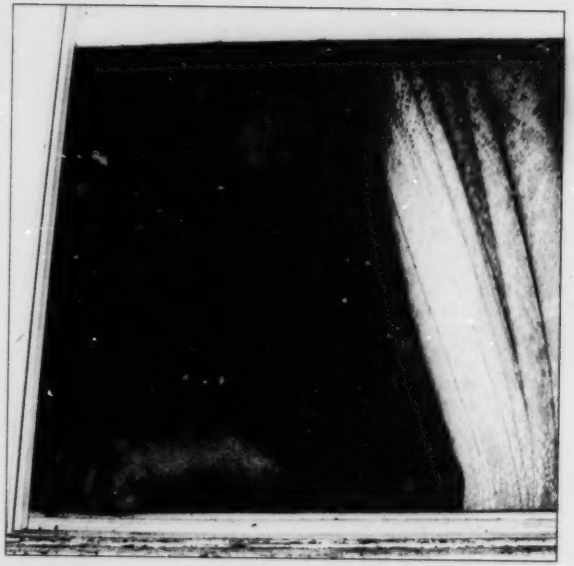
Great Horned Serpent, T'jipijkan, Alan Syliboy
1999, acrylic, ink on canvas, 51.0 x 122.5
Collection of the artist

Rachael and Charlie, Alan Syliboy
2000, phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper, 76.0 cm diameter
Collection of the artist

Star Woman, Alan Syliboy
2000, acrylic, ink on paper, 37.5 x 27.0 cm
Collection of the artist

ALAN SYLIBOY

Alan Syliboy at his home in Millbrook, Nova Scotia
Photo: Jim Logan



The following weekend after visiting Alex Janvier, I visit Alan's home on the edge of Millbrook reserve. I am greeted in the circular driveway by two small noisy dogs. One I know is his, as I have visited with Alan a number of times over the past few years, the other, just a friend, I figure. I knock, hear a faint 'hello', and walk in, as I was expected. I am greeted on the landing by yet another dog, a black lab pup that I am sure is just as happy to see any visitor. I walk upstairs to the living room area, there is coffee on as usual and Alan is already pouring me a cup. In Alan's living room are many paintings. Like Alex, Alan is always working. On a table in the livingroom are piles of watercolour and ink drawings, on the shelf are many ceramic tiles, painted and finished in Alan's recognizable style. He has, of all things, a didjeridoo[1] made from local hardwood leaning in the corner painted with Mi'kmaq symbols and characters. He also has a Mi'kmaq burial pot that he had specially made to study and eventually paint. Leaning along the floor of one wall are an assortment of beautiful paintings of masks, figures, and landscapes. It was like a deja vu of sorts, when I think back to Alex's studio, the difference being is that Alan's studio is in his home. Alan's family share the same space. There are a couple of electric guitars and amps in the living room as well. Alan plays a solid bass, and his son Evan is learning guitar and seems to have found his niche in music rather than painting. On the stereo, the Beatles are nostalgically playing and outside on the deck, one's eye is immediately attracted to an overactive bird feeder hanging off of a decoratively painted limb. There are a variety of birds working the feeder along with a couple of squirrels. Alan sits at his kitchen table with his coffee, and we talk about art, aboriginal art, and together we theorize where it is going. We have done this before and it is always an enjoyable time.

Alan also has 'sweats' in his backyard, just beyond the bird feeder, and behind some brush is an encampment with two sweat lodges. In the past I have sweated here also and I tell Alan about the sweat I had with Alex. We agree it would be good to have Alex come over to 'sweat' and feast when he comes to Halifax for Homeboys.

The following interview was conducted at Alan Syliboy's home on February 11, 2001.

Alan Syliboy: I would like to dedicate my contribution to this exhibition to my grandfather and grandmother, Rachael and Charlie Marshall and my parents, Theresa and Ernie Syliboy, and to my children, Marc and Evan and Erin. I would also like to dedicate it to the Millbrook Native Community, where I was born and brought up. Millbrook was a very small community and I knew every person in it, when I was growing up. I want to capture some of that intimacy in this exhibition.

JL: Where were you born, Alan?

AS: I was born in 1952 right in Truro, and have lived here in Millbrook all my life.

JL: What is your tribal affiliation?

AS: I am Mi'kmaq and a member of the Millbrook First Nation.

JL: Geographically where is your territory, your home?

AS: Mi'kma'ki , which encompasses all of present day Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, most of eastern New Brunswick, Maine, Massachusetts, the Gaspe Region and South Eastern Newfoundland.

So you can see we had quite a large territory to call our own.

JL: Why is it important for you to stay in Millbrook?

AS: The major reason I think is that it just never occurred to me to actually move. I never thought moving would be the answer to solving problems or finding another advantage. I am quite content here. It is a lot easier to make sense of the world from where I am. The anchor is here in my community.

JL: Can you tell me something of your journey to become an artist?

AS: My first recollections are of doing some drawing in school, even though we did not have a structured art class. It was really frowned upon to mark up your books, which I did. I tried to conceal what I was doing because if you got caught you would get whacked over the head with the book and I had that happen a few times.

I used to size-up myself to other Native students who were also 'drawers', many who were much

better than me. People made a big deal out of who could draw and who couldn't. Drawing became a source of pride even though I never considered myself as one of the top 'drawers.' My drawing was totally self-enjoyment. Looking back on it now, I realize that confidence has to be built and at that time I certainly didn't have any.

Today if I look at some of those students, those who haven't passed on, the difference between me and them is that I continued to draw, for them it was just a phase. I owe a lot to Shirley Bear who came into Millbrook for T.R.I.B.E. Incorporated[2] to recruit people to train to do art workshops on reservations in the Maritimes and Maine. She selected me. I was working at my uncle's cabinet shop at the time and left there to go to Salem, New Hampshire. Once there, we trained for three months with various New England artists. It was an incredible experience for me, being young (19 years old) and being able to broaden my horizons and having all these major experiences at a young age. It was through this project that I got my first real paint set and Shirley Bear gave me a quick lesson on how to mix paint and we'd go out and paint at some lakes. We did workshops, I would set up my easel wherever and start to paint. Her instruction was very basic, just how to mix colours and then she would leave us on our own. At first I believe I did Shirley Bear knock-offs, as any artist does when he has a mentor. Eventually, I would find my own trail.

JL: How long was it from that point that you realized art could become a career?

AS: I think after this T.R.I.B.E. thing, I tried to stop painting, or even quit painting, and found out over some months that I realized I really couldn't stop. It had become a way to express myself and from that time on, art would always be there in one form or another.

With that realization I attended the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

JL: What field of art did you decide to study at NSCAD?

AS: At NSCAD I hung out with the painters but I took ceramics, because of the probable influence a painting instructor might have on me, especially since I was starting to work with petroglyphs[3] and Mi'kmaq cultural themes. So I avoided painting class and opted for a Life Drawing class. I don't know if it helped or not. I do know whenever I did try to train as an artist in the accepted forms, it damaged the pattern I was making for myself and it would take me months to get back to what I felt comfortable with.

I'd always talk with the painting students, not the instructors, and I found out most of them were looking for some sort of instruction book, a guide to painting. I think many of them were like that, they didn't know what to paint so they were looking to someone to tell them what to paint or how to paint it. I felt I didn't want that. I wanted the opposite of that, so I never felt compelled to join that classroom. In the two years I was attending, I managed a few credits but graduating wasn't the goal. I was happy with the social life. I was soaking up a lot of experiences from people I met from all over the world. It was like an international café because I spent most of my time at the coffee shop. That was just a tremendous outreach for me, a Mi'kmaq boy from just an hour away, wearing a hockey jacket. I was the only one at NSCAD with a hockey jacket on and I really felt like a fish out of water, but I really enjoyed it, the people were really cool. Talking with other artists was just a very enjoyable experience.

JL: What led you away from NSCAD?

AS: I never really thought of it like that. I think it came to a point where I would have to make a decision, that if I was going to stay there I would have to find a goal and go for that goal. My two years there were more like orientation, in a way, for me and I was just checking them out. At the end of that time I decided I would go back and make cabinets and do my art. A lot of artists have the same idea of finding a steady job, but I had to find one that would afford me a chance to do my art between the cracks. That was what I was searching for. Once I decided I was going to paint, that decision was definite, I had to go find a way to accomplish that and support myself. So I look around the reserve and asked myself who brings in money on a regular basis. I realized it was trades people; electricians, plumbers, and oil burner mechanics. I chose oil burner mechanic. I met two other local artists who were oil burner mechanics too. (David Woods and Pat Powell) They came to the same conclusion as me!

Marriage came into the picture at the same time, so NSCAD was no longer necessary or possible.

JL: What made you decide to go more commercial with your work than to just staying with fine art? *Or was there really any option at that time?*

AS: I didn't consider at the time, that

doing t-shirts and that sort of commercial end of it would affect the bigger picture of my art career. I never really even considered that. It was more just a basic reaction to trying to make a living. I didn't have the whole picture thought out. This is what I was doing, it was working, it was difficult but was generally successful overall for quite a number of years. It put my name out there, once my name became known, it just helped me even more.

I use to go to shows where I would sell ninety percent t-shirts and ten percent art, as time went on, and my reputation grew as an artist, that changed to ten percent shirts and ninety percent art.

JL: Are you still working in those sort of venues?

AS: Yeah, but they are really more of a side thing now. The merchandise part of it is very minimal, even the prints have taken a back seat to originals and commissions. Things are getting more and more busy. I think the web site has a lot to do with the increased success. It has proven to be a good marketing tool. I know artists are concerned about having their images ripped off but the images on my web page cannot be reproduced with any quality.

JL: Tell us how your art has changed over the past twenty years.

AS: I've looked at some of my older pieces and think the process I worked out has not changed a great deal. My art practice has always embodied themes of continuity and teaching, quest and guidance, creation and spirit, family and belonging. In the *Grandmother* and *Grandfather* series I deal with these ideas, especially in relation to my grandparents. It also offers a study in the process and nature of artistic choices that acknowledge tradition. A recent review in ARTSatlantic relegates my work to the realm of Native 'traditionalist', a title I bear gladly if used to denote awareness of and respect for the ways of ancestral artists. However, here I take it to infer a naive longing for rigid historicity and authenticity. While celebrating continuity and teachings of the past, I am quite aware of time's rupture and inevitable distortion.

What has changed are techniques. Mediums have opened up. I am able to do what I wanted to do twenty years ago a lot easier, a lot better and more effectively now. However, the themes have not changed a great deal. I am using photographs now. I like the idea of using an old photograph and placing it into a painting, but making them fused as one, blending them together with colour so that you can't really tell where the photo begins or ends. I am generally using my own photographs I have taken over the past thirty years. So it's my photos, an old interest of mine, and my painting all coming together now.

JL: In using petroglyphs, do you find yourself limited in their use, as most I have seen are quite accurate to the original? What is the thinking process involved when you use them and when you add on to them?

AS: I create the present with respect to the past. My creation is no less by choice, but my choice is to explore and construct, not reconstruct a personal/Mi'kmaq visual language. I have seen books of petroglyph tracings and there are hundreds of images in them. I am not sure of their ages, nor did they always seem to relate to each other. They are sort of like a collage and I like that. They are not heavily structured, like what you would see on the west coast, where the elements are quite defined as to what determines a painting as a Haida painting or design. Petroglyphs, to me, seem haphazard. They may or may not be, because I don't pretend to know what they all mean. They look like big collage paintings to me and when I went to see them I felt the same way. They ran into each other, they weren't set in little squares with their own space, necessarily. I felt that they could be all just one painting from one person. We do not really know. For me using elements of petroglyphs is an enterprise of iconography and expression. This is not replication or style-codifying, it's exploration of an artistic language. Accordingly, sources and resources; inspiration and respect; creation and re-creation are elements of my aesthetic practice.

Some times I start with a petroglyph character, other times not. If I start with a petroglyph character, then I want to make an environment for it. I want to put in a similar environment so that the figure and the surroundings make sense to me. I have the luxury of not knowing or having colour involved here. They are just line drawings, unstructured, and I am not inhibited but am able to create a flow that makes it easy to incorporate them into the painting or the flow of painting will follow them. It can flow either way. My paintings are not plotted out, there is no sketching involved, my art is not built that way. It is a process of working for flow, and where it goes I don't even know. To me, that is one of the best parts of painting. I am not sure how a piece will look finished

when I start. To me, that is the most enjoyable part of making my art.

JL: What do believe are the duties of an artist today?

AS: I think they have a duty to make good art, what they deem to be good art. They have a duty not to sell themselves short but to be challenged by their own art.

The artist shouldn't become satisfied with a piece that sells particularly well but should have the fortitude to go beyond that. I know there is always the need to support oneself but if the artist concentrates on producing good art, everything else, (sales, commissions, exhibitions etc.) will follow.

JL: From your experience, what can you tell young aspiring artists about becoming a full time artist?

AS: When I look at my own background, the material I have used, and the searching I have done all through the years of this art journey, which is also a spiritual journey, I have come to realize they are connected, that there is overwhelming potential today to express yourself through so many mediums. Computer art, multi-media work, film and video, I can appreciate all of these mediums, and I think the exposure to these mediums is where art schools can be a valuable benefit for young artists. Not that it is necessary, it is just so convenient to be able to learn all the techniques associated with so many relatively new mediums. I have incorporated many new media into my work and I believe I will continue to do that although there is not really all that much difference with what I paint today as compared to twenty-five years ago. I use to draw with a lead pencil, then I started using a pen which proved to be way more effective, so I don't use a lead pencil anymore. The ink drawing, however, is no different than the lead pencil.

JL: What do you love about art?

AS: I think preparing the next piece is what I enjoy. If you are always looking for the next way to express yourself and you can look back on a piece of work, it can lead you to another trail of creativity. I appreciate the viewer who tries to look at my paintings on the level of any other artist and puts aside the "purely Mi'kmaq" artist label because it is more than just that, it goes beyond that, too, in the sense that you try to create good art. Who you are is always one and the same but when you look at the individual and his/her art on the basis of what this artist is saying, putting prejudice aside and letting the viewer have an experience with the art, is something I like. I want the viewer to have a moment with my art and when it happens, I find that to be quite rewarding.

JL: Thank you for sharing your time Alan.

AS: Wel'la'in Jim

[1] The didjeridoo is one of the oldest musical instruments in the world. Originating in Aboriginal Australia, didjes were made from eucalypus branches that were hollowed out by termites. The termites would eat the soft core of the eucalyptus, leaving the hollowed branch. According to Aboriginal legend, the first man put the branch to his mouth and played to the night sky. The termites expelled from the open end became the stars. http://sinewaves.net/didjeridoo/

[2] T.R.I.B.E. Inc. refers to Teaching Research In Bi-Cultural Education Incorporated.

[3] Petroglyphs refer to "writings in stone". Throughout Nova Scotia and North America there are many sites where Aboriginal people have carved or etched symbols in stone to mark territory, recite stories or to record history.

LIST OF WORKS

Alex Janvier
Le Goff Reserve, Alberta, 1935

Carry All the Weight 1966
acrylic on canvas board
80.5 X 65.2 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Dicession 1966
acrylic on canvas board
61.0 x 76.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Lilac Time - Calgary, Alberta n.d.
acrylic on canvas board
80.5 x 60.3 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Dispersal Sale n.d.
acrylic on canvas board
65.5 x 81.5 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Earth Principles n.d.
acrylic on canvas board
80.5 x 65.5 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Eternal Struggle 1966
acrylic on canvas board
80.5 x 65.5 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Uni-cultural n.d.
acrylic on canvas board
80.2 x 65.3 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Too Many Spotted Treaties 1966
acrylic on canvas board
80.6 x 65.2 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Shouting to be Heard n.d.
acrylic on canvas board
80.3 x 65.2 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Colourful Regalia n.d.
acrylic on canvas board
81.0 x 60.3 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Cretin 1966
acrylic on canvas board
55.5 x 45.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Pow-Wow 1966
acrylic on canvas board
45.0 x 34.5 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Hilarious Caucus 1966
acrylic on canvas board
44.7 x 35.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

The Sun and the Green 1966
acrylic on canvas board
55.5 x 45.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Heap Big Problem 1966
acrylic on canvas board
55.5 x 45.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Foothills - Just West n.d.
acrylic on canvas board
60.3 x 81.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Flower Time 1966
acrylic on canvas board
55.5 x 45.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Sun Shines, Grass Grows, Rivers Flow 1972
acrylic on canvas
60.0 x 90.7 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Chess Game Lopsided n.d.
acrylic on canvas
60.5 x 81.0 cm
Collection of Indian Art Centre, Hull, Quebec

Bird of Happy Hunting Ground 1974
acrylic on canvas
60.5 x 63.0 cm
Collection of Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
Gift of L. Bruce Pierce, Norflex Limited

The Voice of the Wind n.d.
gouache on paper
50.0 x 41.0 cm
Collection of Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
From the estate of Helen E. Band.

His Name White Collar 1975
acrylic on canvas
122.0 x 92.0 cm
Collection of Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
From the estate of Helen E. Band.

Pathway of Man 1977
acrylic on canvas
122.0 x 92.0 cm
Collection of Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
From the estate of Helen E. Band.

The Word Given 1975
acrylic on canvas
91.4 x 126.8 cm
Collection of Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
From the estate of Helen E. Band.

Untitled #579 1963
watercolour on paper
37.0 x 44.0 cm
Collection of Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario.
Gift of Shell Canada Limited.

Colony of Alberta 1980
oil on canvas
122.0 x 91.5 cm
Collection of Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Blood Tears 2001
acrylic on linen
145.5 x 193cm
Collection of the artist

Y2K 1999
acrylic on linen
154 x 132 cm
Collection of the artist

Slavey 1995
acrylic on canvas
91.5 x 76.2 cm
Collection of the artist

Beginning the Nest 1999
acrylic on canvas
91.5 x 76.2 cm
Collection of the artist

No More Bleeding 2000
acrylic on canvas
40.5 x 30.8 cm
Collection of the artist

Kts'uzi Enelkah (Bead Sewing) n.d.
acrylic on canvas
30.5 x 22.75 cm
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on canvas
50.5 cm diameter
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on canvas
50.5 cm diameter
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on canvas
22.8 x 30.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Cogh Ta Enelkah (Quill Sewing) n.d.
acrylic on canvas
30.5 x 22.8 cm
Collection of the artist

#5, 2000AD Series 2000
acrylic on canvas
20.3 x 25.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on canvas
25.3 x 20.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on canvas
20.5 x 25.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on canvas
23.0 x 30.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Noh'we (Trappers Festival) 1993
acrylic on canvas
30.5 x 23.0 cm
Collection of the artist

Kts'uzi'ke (Bead Moccassins) c.1984
acrylic on canvas
20.5 x 25.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Wedigo'gan 1993
acrylic on canvas
25.3 x 20.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Pic-II n.d.
acrylic on linen
25.5 x 20.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on canvas
20.5 x 25.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Great Canadian Plains Blue Heart n.d.
acrylic on paper
48.0 x 61.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Full Strength Air 1994
Aquarelle on paper
57.5 x 75.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on paper
57.5 x 76.5 cm
Collection of the artist

Untitled n.d.
acrylic on paper
77.5 x 58.0 cm
Collection of the artist

Alan Syliboy

Millbrook Reserve, NS, 1952

All works collection of the artist unless otherwise noted.

Red Star 1999
acrylic, ink on paper
47.0 x 59.5 cm

Red Green Man 2000
acrylic on masonite
68.8 x 98.8 cm

Two Chiefs 2000
acrylic, ink on paper, glicee print
75.0 cm diameter

Joe Julien and Members of Grand Council 2000
glicee print, watercolour on paper
41.0 x 55.0 cm

Woman Praying 2000
ink, acrylic on canvas
76.0 x 61.0 cm

Man with Pipe 2000
ink, acrylic on canvas
76.0 x 61.0 cm

Canoe with Butterfly Totem 2000
phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper
51.0 x 68.5 cm

Rachael and Charlie 2000
phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper
76.0 cm diameter

Charlie 2001
phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper
76.0 diameter

Rachael 2000
phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper
45.0 x 55.0 cm

Spirit Land 2001
glicee print, acrylic, ink on paper
51.0 x 76.0 cm

Moose Reclining 2001
acrylic, ink on paper
64.0 x 69.0 cm

Blue and Green Ferns 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
62.0 x 97.5 cm

Forest of Green Ferns 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
63.0 x 97.0 cm

Red Moose 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
61.0 x 97.0 cm

Vision Quest 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
20.0 x 122.5 cm

Sundance 1999
acrylic, ink on paper
33.0 x 56.0 cm

Star Woman 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
37.5 x 27.0 cm

Grandfathers and Red Earth 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
35.5 x 25.0 cm

Great Horned Serpent, T'jipijkan 1999
acrylic, ink on canvas
51.0 x 122.5

Grass Dancers 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
36.0 x 51.0 cm

Young Joe Brooks 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
43.0 x 33.0 cm

Two Red Cranes 1975
oil on canvas
84.0 x 70.0 cm

Mi'kmaq Woman and Yellow Sun 2001
acrylic, ink on paper
101.5 x 74.5 cm

Grandfather 2001
acrylic, ink on canvas
56.0 x 76.5 cm

Grandmother 2001
acrylic, ink on canvas
56.0 x 76.5 cm

Red Crane 2001
acrylic, ink on canvas
56.0 x 71.0 cm

Handing Down 2001
phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper
76.0 cm diameter

Sun Rises and Sets 2001
acrylic, ink on canvas
6 panels, each 91.5 x 106.5 cm

Anna Mae 2000
acrylic, ink on paper
51.0 x 61.0 cm

Blanket of Green Grass 2001
acrylic, ink on paper
74.0 x 51.0 cm

Moose Hide 2001
smoke tanned moose, acrylic, ink
122.0 x 122.0 cm

Seal Hide 2001
acrylic, ink on tanned seal hide
150.0 x 91.5 cm oval

Blanket Box - Circle of Life 2001
oak, phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper, laminated
53.5 x 51.0 x 81.0 cm

Drum - Charlie Marshall Drum 2001
cedar, moosehide, acrylic, marker, ironwood, acrylic
28.0 x 82.0 cm diameter

Didjeridoo - Mi'kmaq Didj 2000
ironwood, acrylic
148.0 x 6.5 cm

Untitled 2000
acrylic, ink in paper
76.0 x 112.0 cm
Collection of Jenny Ryan, NS

Sweetgrass in the Wind 1999
watercolour, ink on paper
117.0 x 71.0 cm
Collection of Mark Austin, NS

Mi'kmaq Man 1977
oil on masonite
49.5 x 42.5 cm

Blanket Box - Joe Julien 2001
oak, phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper, laminated
53.5 x 51.0 x 81.0 cm

Blanket Box - Quillwork 2001
oak, phototransfer, acrylic, ink on paper, laminated
53.5 x 51.0 x 81.0 cm

Sweetgrass Under Water 1997
acrylic on masonite
60 x 121 cm
Collection of Scott McCrossin, NS